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For

SMART AUTOMATIC RECORDING SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR MONITORING

WAFFER FRAGMENTATION

Enclosed are:

☒ 5 sheets of drawings☒ an assignment of the invention to
WINBOND ELECTRONICS CORP.☐ a certified copy of a _____ application☐ associate power of attorney☒ a verified statement to ascertain small entity status under 37 CFR § 1.9 & 1.27

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Date

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SMART AUTOMATIC RECORDING SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR MONITORING WAFER FRAGMENTATION

Field of the invention

The present invention relates to a smart automatic recording system and
5 method for monitoring wafer fragmentation to facilitate judgement, diagnosis,
genuine factor verification, or engineering improvement and management for
associated technicians by using photographing devices and a personal computer
(PC).

Background of the invention

10 Because the perspectives of wafer factories are good and their throughputs
expand continually, there is an abrupt increase in the equipment quantities and
the degree of machine automation. However, the required training of
technicians becomes more cumbersome, and it is difficult to reckon with
machine anomalies occurring seldom such as wafer fragmentation or
15 malfunction by long-term in-situ monitoring. Therefore, although the CMP
Ebara machine has good stability, the problems of wafer fragmentation and
wafer dropping due to unknown reasons may still occur.

To effectively inspect the reasons of wafer fragmentation and wafer
dropping, the expedient is to perform the machine monitoring. However, the
20 efficiency of using manpower for stationing or a recorder for recording is much
unsatisfactory, and it is difficult to circularize and examine the data among
many people. Moreover, the storage and management of data will be very
bothersome.

Summary and objects of the present invention

Accordingly, the primary object of the present invention is to provide a smart automatic recording system and method for monitoring wafer fragmentation to facilitate judgement, diagnosis, genuine factor verification, or
5 engineering improvement and management for associated technicians.

The secondary object of the present invention is to provide a smart automatic recording system and method for monitoring wafer fragmentation, wherein only the image of a fragmentized wafer and the two images before it will be recorded. Therefore, cheap and convenient factor analysis can be
10 obtained, and the space of the hard disk will not be wasted.

The various objects and advantages of the present invention will be more readily understood from the following detailed description when read in conjunction with the appended drawings, in which:

Brief description of drawing:

15 Fig. 1 is a diagram showing the actual hardware connection of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a flowchart of a smart automatic recording method for monitoring wafer fragmentation according to an embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 3 shows the process to capture, merge, and store the images of wafers;

20 Fig. 4 shows the process performed by means of IC design and a control card to capture, merge, and store the image of wafers;

Fig. 5 is a flowchart of an automatic monitoring system for burglarproof purpose of house derived and modified from the present invention.

Detailed description of preferred embodiment

As shown in Fig. 1, a smart recording system for monitoring wafer fragmentation according a preferred embodiment of the present invention comprises a plurality of photographing devices 11 such as CCD cameras or
5 general recorders so that the circumstances can be monitored when wafers are polished. The photographed images are then transferred to a multiple-image receiver 13 by a multiple-image transmitter 12. The photographed images are digitized and recorded simultaneously by a plurality of photographing devices. After the multiple-image receiver 13 receives the image signals, the images
10 captured at the same time will be merged into the same image frame 14 by the multiple-image receiver 13. Next, the multiple-image receiver 13 transfers the image signals to the input terminal of an image-capturing card in a PC. The PC also receives the wafer-entry and wafer-exit signals and the signal of wafer fragmentation transferred from the I/O port of a polishing apparatus. A whole
15 monitoring system is thus formed.

Please refer to Fig. 2. Three files Image(1), Image(2), and Image(3) set in the PC are first cleared (Step 21). A wafer-entry signal will be transferred to the PC by the polishing apparatus when a wafer enters the polishing apparatus (Step 22). The PC will issue instructions to the photographing devices to let
20 them start to capture images and store the images into the file Image(3) (Step 23). The wafer will proceed to the polishing position and then leave the polishing apparatus when the polishing work is finished. From the moment when the wafer enters the polishing apparatus to the moment when it leaves the polishing apparatus, the photographing devices photograph and monitor

uninterruptedly, with the photographed images shiftably stored in the three files Image(1), Image(2), and Image(3) in the order of Image(3), Image(2), and Image(1). Speaking more clearly, when a new image is received, the image in Image(2) will be stored in Image(1), the image in Image (3) will be stored in
5 Image(2), and the new image will be stored in Image (3). The photographing devices photograph the polishing process of a wafer until the PC receives a signal of wafer fragmentation or a wafer-exit signal from the polishing apparatus. When the situation of wafer fragmentation occurs (Step 24), an image-capturing system will maintain the status and stop the process (Step 241)
10 so that technicians can analyze the images stored in the three files Image(1), Image(2), and Image(3) to find out the reason of wafer fragmentation easily (Step 242). After the problem has been resolved, the polishing process will be continued. Contrarily, if the polishing process is successful so that the situation of wafer fragmentation does not arise, the file Image(2) will be stored as the
15 file Image(1), the file Image(3) will be stored as the file Image(2), and the file Image(3) will be cleared. The above procedures are repeated until the polishing work of the whole batch of wafers is finished.

Fig. 3 shows the process to capture, merge, and store the images of wafers, which process comprises the steps of:

- 20
- (1). capturing an image signal by a plurality of photographing devices;
 - (2). transferring the image signal to an image receiver;
 - (3). receiving the image signal by the image receiver;
 - (4). merging the images captured at the same time into the same image frame by the image receiver;

(5). judging whether a wafer enters the polishing apparatus (judging whether the state of the store instruction is "ON");

(6). digitizing the captured image by an image-capturing card in a PC when a wafer enters the polishing apparatus;

5 (7). storing the digitized image into a file Image(3) set in the PC.

The photographing device used in Step (5) to judge whether a wafer enters the polishing apparatus can be a CCD camera. The judgement can be made according to the signal transferred from the I/O port of the polishing apparatus. After the image-capturing system in Step (4) maintains the status and stops the
10 process, technicians can examine the reason of wafer fragmentation to resolve the problem so that normal polishing process can then be continued.

Fig. 4 shows the process performed by means of IC design and a control card to capture, merge, and store the image of wafers. The functional circuits of the above steps (3) to (7) are combined to form a control card so that a more
15 compact system can be obtained.

Please refer to Fig. 5, wherein the signal from the I/O port is changed to be a break-in signal of a burglar. In other words, the system of present invention can be installed in a house as an automatic monitoring system for burglarproof purpose. Because the principle and procedures are identical to those described
20 above, they will not be further illustrated.

Although the present invention has been described with reference to the preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood that the invention is not limited to the details thereof. Various substitutions and modifications have been suggested in the foregoing description, and others will occur to those of

I claim:

1. A smart recording system for monitoring wafer fragmentation, comprising mainly:

5 a plurality of photographing devices for simultaneously monitoring the circumstances when wafers are polished;

a multiple-image transmitter for transferring the image signals photographed by said photographing devices;

10 a multiple-image receiver for receiving the image signals transferred from said multiple-image transmitter and then merging the images captured at the same time into the same image frame; and

15 a personal computer wherein the I/O port of an image-capturing card can receive the image signal transferred from said multiple-image receiver, said PC also being used to receive the signal when a wafer enters or leaves the polishing apparatus and the signal of wafer fragmentation from a signal-transmitting device.

2. The smart recording system for monitoring wafer fragmentation as claimed in claim 1, wherein said photographing devices are CCD cameras.

3. The smart recording system for monitoring wafer fragmentation as claimed in claim 1, wherein said signal-transmitting device is an I/O port.

- 20 4. A smart recording method for monitoring wafer fragmentation, comprising mainly the steps of:

(1). clearing three files Image(1), Image(2), and Image(3) set in a personal computer;

(2). judging whether a wafer enters a polishing apparatus; repeating this step

if the answer is negative until a wafer enters the polishing apparatus;

(3). capturing images by a plurality of photographing devices and storing the images in said file Image(3);

(4). judging whether a signal of wafer fragmentation is generated;

5 maintaining the status of an image-capturing system and stopping the process if the answer is positive; continuing the next step otherwise;

(5). continuing to capture images by said photographing devices, judging whether the wafer leaves the polishing apparatus, jumping back to said Step (4) if the answer is negative until the wafer leaves the polishing apparatus;

10 (6). storing said file Image(2) as said file Image(1), storing said file Image(3) as said file Image(2), clearing said file Image(3); and

(7). repeating said Steps (2) to (6) until the polishing work of the whole batch of wafers is finished.

5. The smart recording method for monitoring wafer fragmentation as claimed
15 in claim 4, wherein said photographing device used in said Step (5) is a CCD camera.

6. The smart recording method for monitoring wafer fragmentation as claimed in claim 4, wherein the judgement in said Step (2) is made according to a wafer-entry signal transferred from an I/O port.

20 7. The smart recording method for monitoring wafer fragmentation as claimed in claim 4, wherein the judgement in said Step (4) is made according to a wafer-fragmentation signal transferred from an I/O port.

8. The smart recording method for monitoring wafer fragmentation as claimed in claim 4, wherein the judgement in said Step (5) is made according to a

wafer-exit signal transferred from an I/O port.

9. The smart recording method for monitoring wafer fragmentation as claimed in claim 4, wherein after the status of said image-capturing system is maintained and the process is stopped in said Step (4), technicians can
5 examine the circumstances.

10. The smart recording method for monitoring wafer fragmentation as claimed in claim 9, wherein said Step (1) is jumped back to after technicians examine the circumstances.

11. A storing method of wafer images, comprising mainly the steps of:

- 10 (1). capturing an image signal by a plurality of photographing devices;
(2). transferring the image signals to an image receiver;
(3). receiving the image signals by said image receiver;
(4). merging the images captured at the same time into the same image frame
by said image receiver;
15 (5). judging whether a wafer enters a polishing apparatus (judging whether the state of the store instruction is "ON");
(6). digitizing the captured image by an image-capturing card in a PC when a wafer enters the polishing apparatus;
(7). storing said digitized image into a file Image(3) set in said PC.

20 12. The storing method as claimed in claim 11, wherein said photographing devices are CCD cameras.

13. A control card formed by combining the functional circuits for controlling said Steps (3) to (7) in the storing method as claimed in claim 11.

Abstract

The present invention proposes a smart automatic recording system and method for monitoring wafer fragmentation, which system comprises a plurality of photographing devices, a multiple-image transmitter, a multiple-
5 image receiver, and a PC. The photographing devices are used to monitor the circumstances when wafers are polished. The photographed images are then transferred to the multiple-image receiver by the multiple-image transmitter. After the multiple-image receiver receives the image signals, it merges the images captured at the same time into the same image frame. Next, the
10 multiple-image receiver transfers the image signal to the input terminal of an image-capturing card in the PC. The PC also receives the wafer-entry and wafer-exit signals and the signal of wafer fragmentation transferred from the I/O port of the polishing apparatus. The present invention can be exploited to facilitate judgement, diagnosis, genuine factor verification, or engineering
15 improvement and management for associated technicians.

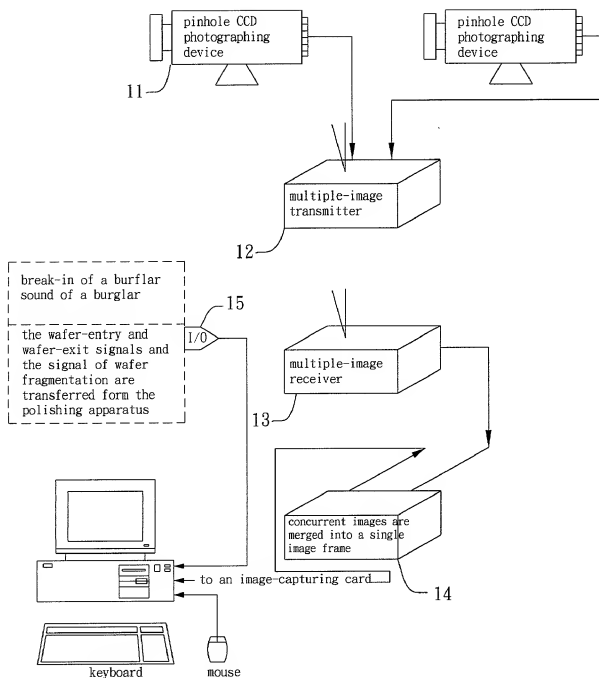


Fig. 1

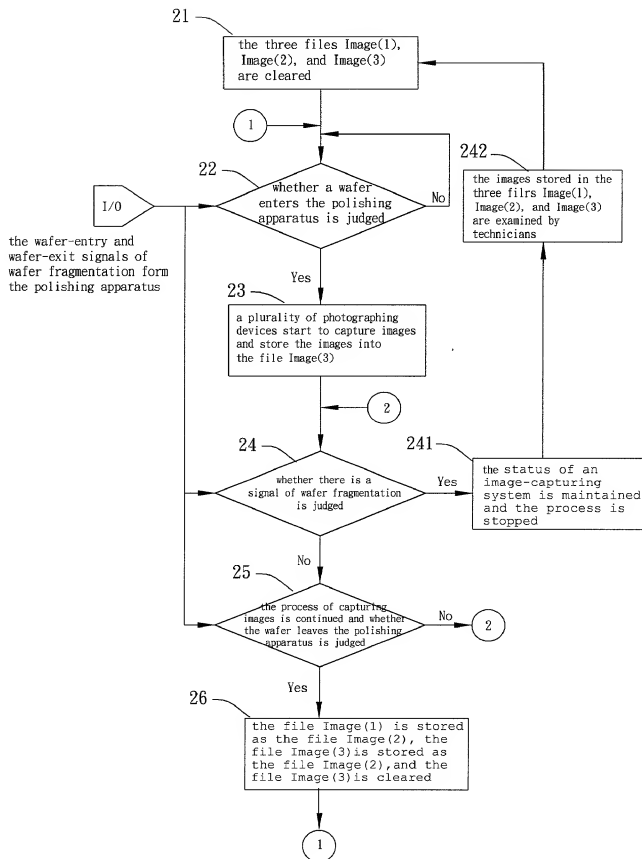


Fig. 2

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graph TD
    31[31 a plurality of CCD (wireless) cameras capture image signals] --> 32[32 the photographed image signals are transferred to a received]
    32 --> 33[33 the photographed image signals are received]
    33 --> 34[34 images are merged into a single image frame]
    34 --> 35{35 whether the state of the storing instruction is "ON" is judged}
    35 --> 36[36 image is digitized by an image-capturing card]
    36 --> 37[37 the digitized image is stored in the file Image(3)]

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The "OFF" state of the storing instruction indicates that a wafer enters the polishing apparatus

Fig. 3

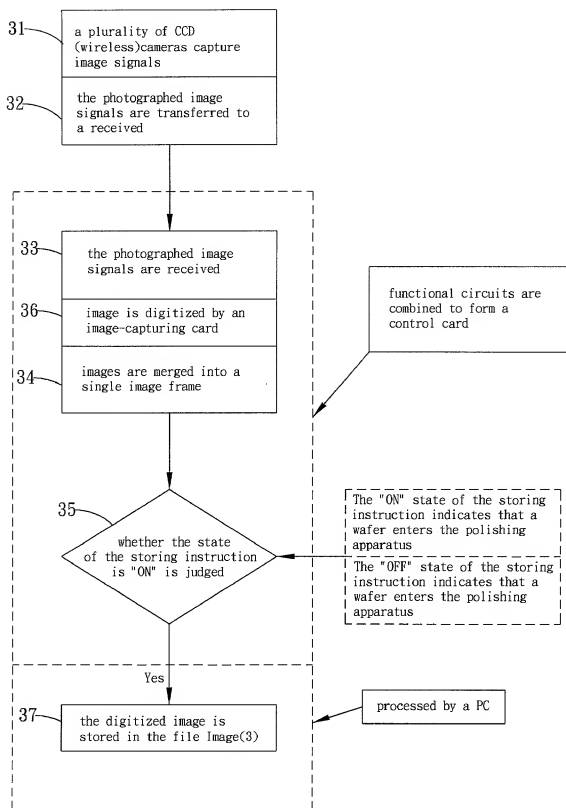


Fig. 4

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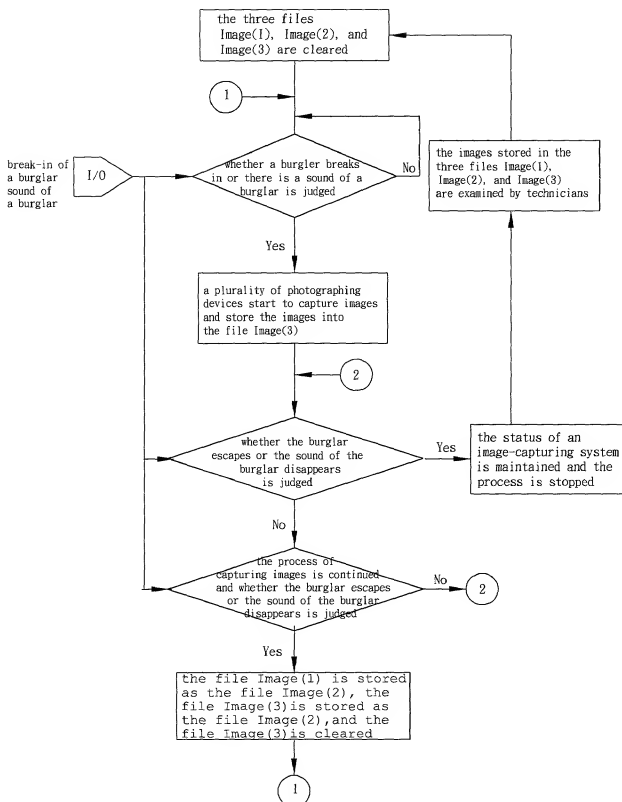


Fig. 5

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